

NuLu Review Overlay District

Principles and Guidelines

Objective

The NuLu Review Overlay District (the NuLu Overlay, for short) was created in 2015 to help enhance the appearance, sustainability, and economic vitality of the NuLu area - one of the community's burgeoning mixed-use areas. The boundaries of the NuLu Overlay are shown on Appendix A of this text. The NuLu Overlay is administered by the Louisville Metro Division of Planning and Design Services, with input from a citizen-review panel known as the NuLu Review Overlay District Committee, as prescribed by KRS 82.670. Within the Division of Planning and Design Services, the Urban Design Administrator and Staff (Overlay Staff) administers, manages and conducts the architectural review process.

The guidelines are not intended to discourage development or to dictate architectural design or style, but to encourage development that contributes to the overall design quality and sustainability of the NuLu Overlay area. The guidelines address construction and other external changes to buildings and properties located in the Overlay District area.

They are intended to promote compatibility of new development with existing land use and design features, to enhance NuLu's visual quality, to reinforce the area's focus on sustainability, to preserve the area's mixed-use character with a pedestrian friendly environment, and to strengthen the economic vitality of the area by encouraging new investment in business, residential, and commercial development in appropriate locations.

All development proposals within the NuLu Overlay area shall comply with applicable guidelines; however a proposal that does not conform to one or more specific guidelines may be approved by the Committee or its staff if they determine that the proposal is in conformance with the intent of the guidelines as a whole.

The principles and guidelines of the NuLu Overlay expand upon the requirements of the Land Development Code as necessary to achieve the objectives of these facets of urban design in recognition of a project's specific location.

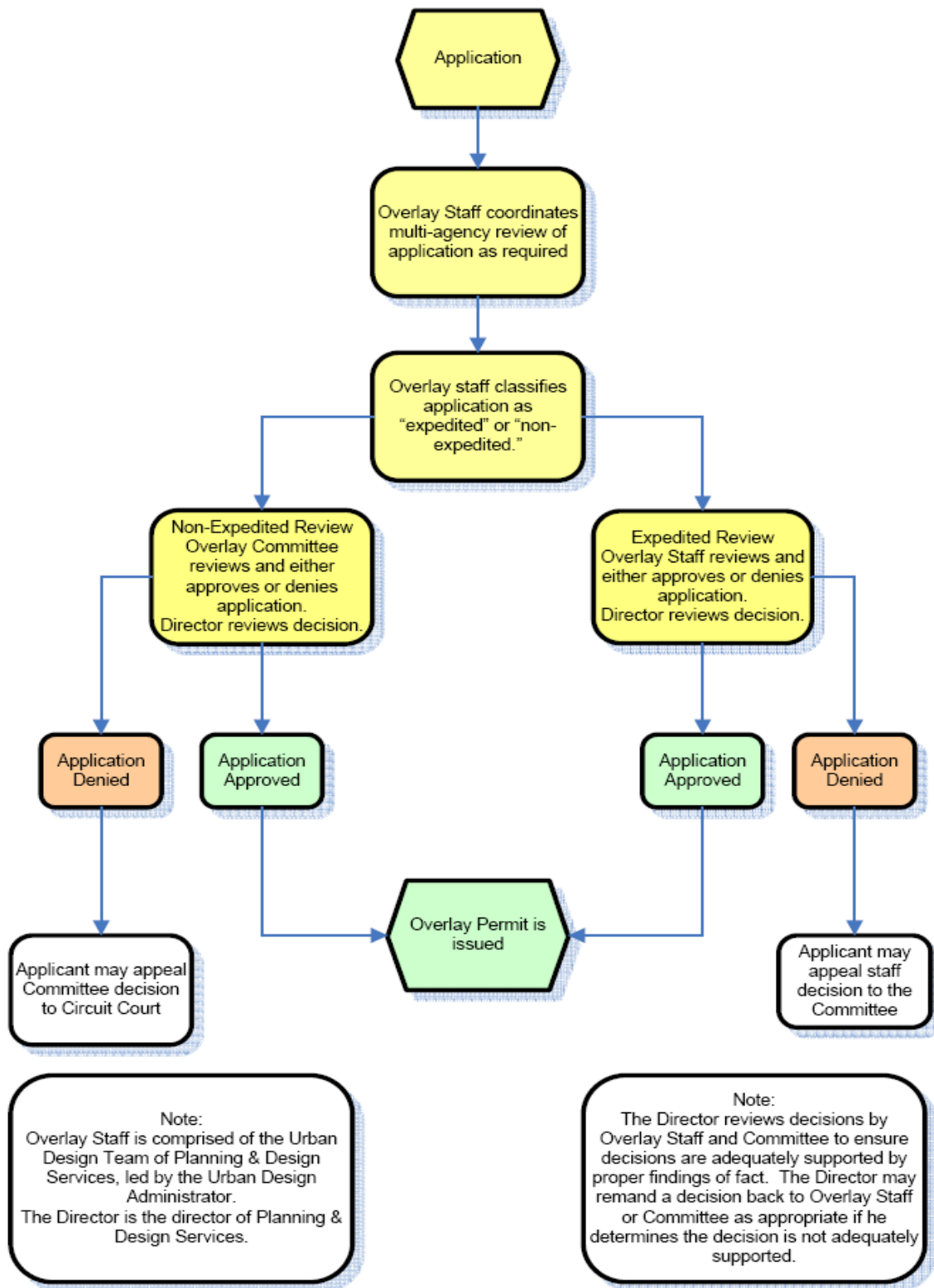
Distinctive Characteristics of the NuLu Review Overlay District

There are several defining characteristics that are identified with the NuLu Review Overlay District that help to shape the identity of the area. The NuLu District is situated in the Phoenix Hill Neighborhood and its history is preserved and portrayed through the commercial, residential, and religious structures located within the District's boundaries. The NuLu District is part of the Phoenix Hill National Register Historic District, and includes Local Landmark properties and other buildings of historical or architectural significance. Commercial structures and residences with distinctive architectural features assist in creating a unique contextual and eclectic environment. Several architecturally significant buildings, due to their location, height, mass and design serve as visual landmarks throughout the District and downtown.

East Market Street runs through the core of the District and serves as its primary connector with Downtown. The street is primarily bordered by two and three story Italianate commercial structures from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, along with modern infill structures that were constructed on vacant lots. The width of Market Street was historically a key element that allowed it to function as a market for selling goods; this feature remains a distinctive design feature today that enhances both pedestrian and vehicular movement.

Building height in the District ranges from one to five stories, with the predominance given to buildings between one and three stories in height. The overall design character of the area is that of building forms featuring both large and small scale massing, with a feeling of light and openness. Many buildings, particularly retail and related structures on Market Street, have both a well located and defined public entrance from the sidewalk. A majority of the District's structures are historic and utilize such materials as brick, wood siding, cast iron, and metal. Contemporary structures in the District highlight glass curtain wall and wall panel cladding systems. The District also includes historic churches, a mix of one-story residential shotgun style homes and shotgun homes with camel back additions, and a mixture of commercial manufacturing and warehouse storage structures.

NULU REVIEW OVERLAY DISTRICT -Review Process-



SIGNAGE

Objective

Signage is important to every business. By posting signs businesses not only create a brand image for themselves, but also create an opportunity to attract customers. The Signage Guidelines promote attractive, artistic, well-proportioned and thoughtfully located signs, which will enhance the existing NuLu area. Signs are to be designed as integral parts of the site and architectural design of a proposed project.

Sign Design Guidelines

1. Applicants are required to re-use and reface existing "significant, historic, or contributing signs". "Significant, historic, or contributing Signs" are signs that are unique in design or material fabrication. These signs contribute to the history and diverse character of the NROD. (See list of significant, historic, or contributing Signs; next page). For signage to be recognized as "significant, historic, or contributing" or for existing recognized signs to be removed or altered an application must be submitted to the overlay staff.
2. Significant, historic, or contributing signs or graphics that have been painted directly onto walls and represent out of date logos or logos for businesses that are no longer in business are encouraged to remain in either their existing faded condition or restored to their original condition. These signs are recognized as contributing to the historic artistic character of the area and our community.
3. Back-lit cabinet signs and monument signs including re-faced signs shall have opaque, non-illuminated face panels; only the individual letters and / or logos should be back-lit, not the entire surface of the sign.
4. Freestanding pole signs are not allowed. Existing pole signs that are associated with a property that has not been abandoned or vacant for a period of less than one (1) year may be restored or refaced, but not expanded in size or scope.
5. Attached wall signs or projecting signs are preferred. Attached signage composed of individual letters or symbols is also preferred.
6. Signs that incorporate flashing text, animation, moving graphics, video, or LED text / image signage with a text change rate greater than one (1) hour are prohibited.
7. Storefront window signage including temporary window signage, window cling signs, and promotional advertising shall not exceed 25% of the total window area. Neon and hanging window signs are encouraged, and add to the "active atmosphere" for both vehicles and pedestrians.
8. Projecting wall signs can be erected or attached to a building's wall and extend a minimum of 18" to a maximum of 8'-0" from the wall surface. These signs are mounted perpendicular to the building's façade.

9. Projecting banner signs can project no more than 24" from the face of the building. These signs should be attached so that they do not "flap" in the air, and should be removed or replaced when they show signs of unattractive wear.
10. Existing non-conforming signage must be removed prior to new approved signs being installed. A "Significant, Historic, or Contributing Sign" as defined by the guideline in A1.1 is exempt from this requirement.
11. Neon and Neon simulated bulbs (such as "fiber optic" and "LED lighting strips" that simulate neon) are encouraged and help to maintain a sense of activity and contribute to the animated environment of the area.
12. Projecting light fixtures used for externally illuminated signs shall be simple and unobtrusive in appearance. They should not obscure the graphics of the sign.
13. Directional signage is used to direct pedestrian or vehicular traffic. No more than one (1) image, logo, or text combined with the "entry" or "exit" text is allowed on each directional sign. Directional signage cannot exceed 3'-0" in height above finished grade.
14. All exposed conduit, electrical transformer boxes, and electrical raceways should be concealed from public view, or painted to blend in with background.
15. Multiple signs placed on a building's façade should be compatible with other surrounding signage located on the structure.
16. Permanent banner signage shall be made of canvas material or matte textured vinyl material.

LIST OF SIGNIFICANT, HISTORIC, OR CONTRIBUTING SIGNS

Voelcker & Co. – attached	642 E. Market Street
Joe Ley figurines – painted	615 E. Market Street
Historic Sign under Decca – painted	812 E. Market Street
Multiple painted historic signs	720 E. Market Street
D&E Marine – painted	826 U.S. 31E
De Hart Paint Company – painted	115 S. Campbell Street
Service Welding and Machine Co. – painted	700 U.S. 31E
Louisville Chemical – attached	601 E. Jefferson Street
Muth's Candies – projecting	630 E. Market Street
Albert Hess Furniture Co. – projecting	203 S. Hancock Street
Bourbon Stock Yards – attached	1057 E. Main Street
Coke-Cola – painted historic sign	304-312 S. Campbell Street
Building dates and office sign – attached	121 S. Clay St.
Service Tanks multiple signs – attached	700-798 E. Main Street

SIGN MOUNTING AND PLACEMENT

Objective

The following signage guidelines help bring greater awareness to businesses while allowing signs to add to the diversity and character of the NuLu Review Overlay District.

Sign Mounting and Placement Guidelines

1. Signs shall be mounted or erected so they do not obscure the architectural features or openings of a building.
2. Signs may not be located in the right-of-way unless they are approved by the public works department. Exceptions include portable "A" Frame Signs which must be removed at the close of the business day. "A" frame signs cannot exceed 4'-0" in height and 3'-0" in width.
3. All wood signs need to be stained or painted and have a finished appearance.
4. No sign or portion of a sign shall extend above the cornice line at the top of the building facade or exceed 20 feet in height above finished grade. Rooftop signs are prohibited.
5. New outdoor advertising billboards are not permitted. Removal of existing billboards is encouraged to promote an active and engaging atmosphere for pedestrians and vehicle traffic.

AWNING AND AWNING SIGN

Objective

Awnings can add aesthetic value as well as provide shade and cover for pedestrians. There are, however, a few guidelines that need to be followed. Awnings and canopies should be mounted in locations that respect the design of a building and the neighboring structures; including the arrangement of bays and openings. In general, they should not obscure transom windows, grillwork, piers, pilasters, or ornamental features of a structure.

Awning Guidelines

1. Lettering, logos, and other symbols shall take up less than 33% of the total area of an awning that is attached to a commercial structure. It is recommended that signs and logos be located on the valance area of awnings that have them.
2. Convex (or bull nose) awnings are not allowed. Shed awnings are visually lighter and have simpler features, and they are more traditional in appearance than convex or bull nose awnings. Awnings with no end panels are more transparent and allow better views into openings and storefronts. Awnings with back-lit graphics or other kinds of interior illumination are not allowed.
3. Approved awning fabric materials include canvas and vinyl.

4. Metal or glass canopies may be appropriate on some buildings if they are compatible with the design and scale of the building.
5. Awnings and canopies are to be installed at a minimum of 8'-0" above finished grade so that pedestrian entry clearances are operationally functional. Awnings must project a minimum of 24" from the building. They should be mounted on the wood or metal framing within a door or window opening (and not on the wall surrounding the opening).
6. In openings with transoms, the awnings should be mounted on the horizontal framing element separating the storefront window from the transom. Awnings should be designed to project over individual window and door openings and not be a continuous feature extending over masonry piers or arches.

BUILDING

Objective

The buildings in the NuLu Review Overlay District are not only picturesque but also have strong historic character. New structures should have a "contextual fit" and reinforce the existing pattern of individual storefronts extending throughout the NuLu area. Contextual design elements include building setbacks, building heights, building form, rhythm of openings, rhythm of horizontal building lines, color, materials, texture, adjacent building styles, and building details should be respected in new projects. The Overlay Staff can assist a licensed Architect or design professional to develop designs that adaptively reuse these structures to meet the needs of new businesses and services. The Overlay Staff will also assist the applicant through the review and approval process.

Building Guidelines

1. Existing structures in the NuLu area are strongly encouraged to be sustainably renovated and reused.
2. Buildings should be "pedestrian-friendly." Design building façade elements that promote a pedestrian-friendly environment including: building to the edge of sidewalk, large storefront window openings at the ground floor, awnings, canopies, lighting, and entrances that face the street.
3. All storefront windows and doors at ground level shall have clear glass or light window tinting. Severe window tinting or mirrored glass is not permitted unless reapproved by staff for "special conditions." Examples of "special conditions" may include restaurant kitchen areas, storage space, and restrooms that would need to be hidden from public view.
4. New structures should be located at the front property line. Building sites should provide side yards wide enough to allow for maintenance of the building unless common party walls are provided on the lot line.
5. High quality materials and historically appropriate architectural details at the ground floor / street level of buildings can both accent buildings, and provide visual interest for pedestrians and motorists.

6. New structures greater than three stories high may be permissible if taller portions are set back from the street frontage so that overall sight lines are compatible, and if the increased height is not intrusive towards adjacent structures.
7. New structures must be a minimum of two stories high and should be no shorter than one story beneath the height of adjacent properties.
8. A visual terminus, such as a cornice at the top of a wall helps articulate the architecture, and gives it a completed finished look.
9. All new mechanical equipment that is visible from a public right of way should be installed to have a minimal impact on adjacent properties and from public view unless the equipment is solar dependent. In this instance, function supersedes design. Replacement of existing mechanical equipment is considered general maintenance and will not require a staff review. Additional permits and approvals by other government agencies or authorities may be required.
10. Permanent service counters, service bars, decks, or similar structures may not be constructed in front of a building's primary street facing façade.

PUBLIC ART

Objective

Public art is the continuously growing record of the community's identity, creativity, values, and its highest aspirations. Public art is defined as art placed on public or publicly-accessible private property, including building exteriors and outdoor public areas. Public art contributes to the local economy, and adds to the richness of the community. The consideration of public art should be included in every project's written development plan.

Public Art Guidelines

1. Public art should be available for the enjoyment and enrichment of people within the community. The plan should include a meaningful allowance for public art in the planning and construction of all projects.
2. Public art can include all mediums, such as sculpture, mural or painting, film, light, or other forms of creative expression that are viewable on a site or building. Commercial logos or elements of commercial advertising for a business or organization are not considered public art under this definition.
3. Public art shall be designed, executed, and supervised by recognized artists or other design professionals who have been trained or have consistently provided examples of artistic work in their medium of expression.
4. Public Art, if implemented, should be integrated with the design of the project or development, and shall aesthetically enhance the urban environment of the Overlay District.

5. Public Art proposals should conform to the design guidelines and master plan established by the Committee for Public Art (COPA).

SITE PLANNING AND PARKING

Objective

Site Planning is an important part of any project. Sites should incorporate attractive and maintainable landscaping to enhance the hardscape of the building. Plants should be used to minimize the visual impact of parking lots and service areas in the NROD.

Site Planning and Parking Guidelines

1. Development Plans shall minimize the adverse visual impact of utility lines on the area. Underground lines or service from the alley, where feasible, is encouraged.
2. Combining existing small, under-utilized lots to create shared parking areas that are more efficient and more accessible is encouraged.
3. Additional surface parking lots and drive-throughs shall not be permitted in the NROD.
4. Parking areas adjacent to the public sidewalks must use landscaping, trees, colonnades or other construction, to maintain the building line created by structures along the sidewalk. Side parking lots which exceed 40% of the total linear lot frontage adjacent to right-of-way shall provide a 36" high masonry, stone, or concrete wall that makes reference to a similar design within the surrounding area extending from the principal structure across the front of the parking area. Surface parking lots with no principal structure shall provide the 36" wall as described. The 36" tall wall can wrap around any existing or proposed monument signage to maintain visibility.
5. Adequate perimeter landscaping, fencing, or a combination of both is required to help screen vehicles and/or equipment from public view. The screening height for vehicle parking lots shall be 36" above finished grade of the lot. This height will enable drivers of vehicles to safely see and avoid other pedestrians and vehicles while screening most parked cars. A 7'-0" max high screened fence or wall can be used for industrial or commercial sites to screen for large vehicles or equipment on site.
6. New commercial developments should provide adequate and significant screening to adjacent residential structures. Opaque landscape buffers and other forms of screening should be used to minimize noise and lighting impact.
7. Fencing and screening shall be constructed of materials compatible with the principal structure.
8. Chain link fencing must not be visible within the NuLu Review Overlay District.
9. Intensity, location, color, and direction of outdoor lighting shall be sensitive to nearby residential areas.

10. The number and width of curb-cuts in the Overlay Area should be minimized to promote pedestrian circulation. Existing continuous curb-cuts should be reduced to widths necessary for vehicular traffic, or removed altogether.
11. Minimum 4'-0" wide landscape buffer area (LBA) containing a 36" minimum height (at maturity) screen shall run along 90% of the lineal area in front of the patio, plaza, or outdoor space that faces the street. This landscape buffer area (LBA) shall include permanent landscaping material such as trees (minimum 1 3/4" caliper size at time of planting), shrubs (minimum 18" height at time of planting), groundcover, and /or perennials. Fences, planters, and/or walls (maximum height of 36") are permitted within the LBA. Landscape Buffer Plantings shall be installed prior to occupancy or use of the patio, plaza, or outdoor space.
12. Existing trees located within the property or adjacent property along the street, alley, or access easement shall be preserved and protected unless the city arborist determines they are not healthy or are dangerous and should be removed. Removed trees should be replaced with appropriate trees approved by the City Arborist. The replacement trees shall be sized at a minimum of 1 3/4" caliper (at time of planting). Replacement tree(s) shall be planted within 3 months of the tree(s) removal or during the next planting season, whichever comes first.
13. The construction or installation of a deck or structure built off the ground and over existing landscaped areas in front of a building's primary façade is prohibited. Balconies located on the second or third floors of buildings that are cantilevered or bracketed, scaled to match the building's façade, and utilize contextual materials are appropriate.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

Objective

Historic buildings (65 years of age or older) comprise a significant part of NROD and are physical reminders of Louisville's early history. The historic buildings in the Area are some of the oldest remaining in the city and exhibit characteristics of classic urbanism. Historic structures define the area's origins while providing unique adaptive reuse potential. Structures over 100 years old are sometimes flanked by more contemporary mid-century ones that exhibit similar urban characteristics of scale, massing, and setback, and are thus contributing structures in their own right. Given the important role of many existing buildings to the history and streetscape of the Area, demolition of any contributing structure will entail stringent review.

Historic Preservation Guidelines

1. Changes to the exterior of Contributing Historic Structures and other structures within the Overlay District that were constructed 65 years ago or longer and have not been significantly altered, shall be reviewed in accordance with the standards established for Contributing Historic Structures by the United States Secretary of the Interior. However, the Director of the Department of Planning and Design Direct or the NuLu Review Overlay Committee may relax these standards in the interest of accomplishing the intentions of these Guidelines.

2. The design of new or substantially remodeled structures that are adjacent to Contributing Historic Structures should be compatible with them and should incorporate similar design details or references where appropriate.
3. No application to demolish any Contributing Historical Structure or structure built 65 years ago or longer shall be approved by the Urban Design Administrator unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of Urban Design Administrator and the Historic Preservation Officer.
 - a. That the rehabilitation of a Structure or construction of a new Structure will have a greater positive impact on the Area's economic vitality and appearance than would preservation of the Structure proposed to be demolished; and the rehabilitation of the Structure or the construction of the new Structure would not be possible or economically feasible without the demolition of the Structure proposed to be demolished; or
 - b. That the applicant cannot obtain a reasonable economic return from the property or Structure unless the Contributing Historical Structure or Structure constructed 65 years ago or longer is demolished in accordance with the application.

SUSTAINABILITY

Objective

Incorporating environmentally sustainable elements into the design and construction of the built environment in the NROD is an important part of any project. Environmentally sustainable elements include: transit facilities, green buildings, heat island reduction, recycled content in infrastructure, and stormwater management.

Sustainability Guidelines

1. Transit facilities should have a covered shelter, seating, bike racks, information kiosks, and appropriate signage.
2. New commercial, industrial, and residential buildings should pursue LEED or equivalent energy efficiency standards.
3. New or replacement roofs with energy efficient "radioactive properties" should be considered.
4. New Infrastructure is encouraged to use at least 50% by mass, recycled or reclaimed materials.
5. Projects should retain, reuse, and/or infiltrate on-site, all of the stormwater that falls on their parcel(s).
6. The surface area of a landscaped or pervious condition slated for a repurposed use must maintain a level of permeability greater than or equal to its current state.